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Items for discussion and decision: energy statistics

Intersecretariat Working Group on Energy Statistics

Note by the Secretary-General

In accordance with a request of the Statistical Commission at its thirty-ninth session,** the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit the report of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Energy Statistics, which is presented to the Commission for information. The report describes the activities of the Working Group in 2007-2008, including the progress on harmonization of definitions of energy products and flows as well as planned future activities. The Commission is requested to take note of the report.

* E/CN.3/2009/1 (to be issued).

** See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2008, Supplement No. 4* (E/2008/24), chap. I.B.

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Report of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Energy Statistics

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I. A brief background note

1. On 22 and 23 November 2005, 25 regional and international organizations met at the International Energy Agency (IEA) in Paris to identify ways and means to strengthen cooperation in order to improve the quality of energy statistics and increase global transparency. The need to harmonize definitions of energy products and flows between organizations was clearly identified as one of the key priorities.

2. In order to launch a harmonization process, the International Energy Agency collected the definitions used by each organization (as well as various other pieces of information on the work of the organization) and prepared a website which presents, among other items, all of the definitions. The objective was to highlight the differences, as well as the many similarities, between definitions and to launch a discussion process among organizations.

II. Second InterEnerStat workshop (November 2007)

3. On 19 and 20 November 2007, the organizations had met at the International Energy Agency in Paris in order to comment on the website and agree on a process for moving the discussion on harmonization forward. Many constructive comments were received from the organizations and the Agency modified the structure of the InterEnerStat website (www.interenerstat.org) accordingly.

4. The organizations also agreed that one consultant should be hired to examine the differences and the similarities and then propose a set of draft harmonized definitions. In July 2008, the consultant submitted his draft definitions which were circulated to all the participating organizations for comments.

5. Comments were received by October 2008 and circulated to all the organizations in order to allow them to prepare for an InterEnerStat meeting dedicated solely to the discussion of the definitions.

III. Third InterEnerStat Meeting, on Harmonization of Definitions of Energy Products and Flows (October 2008)

6. Twenty organizations participated in the meeting, which was held at the International Energy Agency in Paris from 28 to 30 October 2008. Two days were dedicated to the subject of products (coal, renewables, electricity, gas, oil) and one day to that of flows (supply, transformation, consumption). The Meeting was extremely constructive and participants were able to agree, if not on common wording, then at least on guiding principles for each flow and each product.

7. At the end of each session, a document recapitulating the decisions agreed upon during the session was prepared and circulated to all the participants. The decisions can be consulted on the InterEnerStat website.

IV. Next steps

8. Organizations are currently examining the decisions taken at the meeting. When the comments are received, the consultant will incorporate them within a new set of definitions. Each definition will be based on an agreed structure: a short and concise definition, more detailed explanations, and specific remarks (when and where necessary).

9. The second set of definitions will then be circulated to all organizations for comments and fine-tuning. It is the hope of all the organizations to agree on the entire set of definitions by the end of the first quarter of 2009. However, it has also been agreed that there will be no obligation for any participating organization to adopt the definitions as so agreed in their questionnaires or reporting. The most important concern is that the coverage of the definitions used by each organization correspond as much as possible to the coverage of the definitions as agreed in their entirety.

10. As harmonizing definitions is not an easy process, all participating organizations should be commended, even if there is still some progress to be achieved, for their active contributions to the process, made in a very positive spirit of cooperation.

11. One of the actions that could be launched in 2009 by InterEnerStat is the preparation of joint material (presentations) for joint training sessions. The availability of common definitions should certainly facilitate this preparation process.

Annex I

Mandate of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Energy Statistics[a]

The objective of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Energy Statistics is to enhance the coordination of international energy statistics and the collaboration of international (global, regional and sectoral) organizations, with a view to improving the availability and quality of international energy statistics without increasing the response burden on countries, by making best use of resources. In addressing these issues, the Intersecretariat Working Group will give priority to: (a) making an inventory of the current data collection, processing and dissemination system of the major organizations working on energy statistics; (b) reducing the reporting burden by harmonizing data collection, processing and dissemination, by limiting duplication and/or by building links/bridges between existing energy statistics questionnaires, concepts, methods and timetables; (c) improving sharing of the collecting/processing work between organizations and enhancing data-sharing and data transmission once data validation procedures have been agreed and implemented; (d) improving the coordination of energy statistics with social, economic and environmental statistics at the international level; (e) promoting training and capacity-building and coordinating the related efforts; (f) creating joint forums to promote the dialogue of statisticians and the user community; and (g) raising the profile of energy statistics and energy statisticians at all levels.

[a] See document E/CN.3/2006/10, available from http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/sc2006.htm, in particular sect. VI.

Annex II

Participating organizations and bodies

African Energy Commission

African Petroleum Producers Association

Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation

Economic Commission for Europe

EURELECTRIC

Eurogas

European Commission/Statistical Office of the European Communities

European Environment Agency

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

International Atomic Energy Agency

International Energy Agency

International Energy Forum Secretariat

International Monetary Fund

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

Latin American Energy Organization

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries

Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries

United Nations Environment Programme

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change secretariat

United Nations Statistics Division

World Bank

World Coal Institute

World Energy Council